

Good Fellows Who Look After the Destiny of the Automobile Trade in Omaha



HISTORY OF AUTO IN OMAHA

Remarkable Growth of a Young Industry in This City.

CENTER OF GREAT ACTIVITY

Omaha Supplies All the Surrounding Country with Buggies, Cabs and the Business Thrives at All Times of the Year.

Twelve years ago Omaha's sole aim to distinction in the motor world lay in the fact that it had then acquired its first automobile, a second-hand machine which one of its more affluent citizens had had sufficient liberality to import and which could be compared with the giant machines which fill about Omaha's streets these days would appear but poor and insignificant. In those days, however, it was a wonderful acquisition and the man who owned

it was regarded much as would be a man who, nowadays, would bring an aeroplane to the city.

Today with thousands of fine automobiles in the possession of its citizens, with the yearly retail trade in automobiles running up well into the millions, with four automobile organizations, with an automobile steadyway, with annual endurance runs and races and with an automobile show almost unparalleled in the country, Omaha occupies a place alone among the cities of the west in motor affairs.

In the early days of the automobile, when a man wanted a machine he went to the manufacturer for it or bought it from the agent of the manufacturer, who called upon him, there was scarcely any place for the retailing of automobiles. As the machines became more common, however, and it became less and less of an event in the family circle when an automobile was purchased there came a call for a man to occupy a position between the purchaser and the manufacturer.

Auto Have Impressive. How well Omaha men heed that call can best be realized by a trip up Farnam street. "The row" is becoming each year

more and more important as an institution and it is not surprising that such is the case when one realizes that on either side of Farnam street from Eighth to Twenty-fourth and beyond it is next to impossible to find a room which is not occupied as a salesroom, garage or repair shop.

Most of these establishments are commodious, well equipped for their purpose and attractive to the passer-by. In many of them one finds salesrooms fitted up almost to the point of luxury and decorated in a most effective way. In addition to the automobile concerns which have appropriated Farnam street for their own there are to be found a number of shops on Harney street about the equal distance west. Smaller shops are found in every part of the city.

During the year 1909 the automobile men of the city drew into their coffers approximately \$4,000,000, of which three million went for the machines themselves and the odd million for tires, lamps, tops and the thousand and one other things which go to make up the modernly equipped automobile. These figures do not take into consideration all the vast amounts which Omaha's auto users spent for repairs, oil, gasoline and the like.

It is estimated that there are now in the state of Nebraska approaching 300 automobile dealers and of these at least a fourth make Omaha their headquarters. These

men it is who divided the \$4,000,000 among themselves last year and who seem in a fair way to divide a greater amount during this year, for there is scarcely a garage or supply shop in the city which is not sanguine that the year's business will exceed that of last year by from 20 to 30 per cent.

Many Machines Here.

Local dealers estimate the number of automobiles in Omaha as between 1,000 and 1,200. Granting for the sake of argument that the smaller of the two figures is the more nearly correct, we still have a car for every 125 people in the city, which is far from a bad showing when the distance of the city from the big automobile manufacturing centers is realized and it is borne in mind that the total has jumped from one to a thousand in but twelve short years.

Of late much has been said of the automobile as a detriment to society and economists of more or less elevated standing have pointed the finger of scorn at the automobile and named it as the principal cause of the high cost of living. Whether or not these wise men are correct in their conclusions it is undeniable that the automobile in Omaha at least, has done immense good.

Only a few years ago Omaha's pavements were a disgrace to a city of its size and the condition in which the unpaved streets as well as the pavement was kept was an eyesore. During the last twelve months, however, thousands of feet of the worst worn streets of the city have been resurfaced and if plans as yet only tentatively announced materialize, many thousand more yards of new paving will be laid within another year.

For this change a great deal of credit must be given to the automobile owners, for it is almost generally true that the men who own automobiles are men of influence

and the total is now in the neighborhood of seventy-five vehicles. The pioneer in the use of these machines in the city was the Storz Brewing company and that concern still owns the largest of the city's trucks, it being a huge three-ton affair with immense power.

There are two distinct classes of trucks in town—the heavy vehicles, which are used by the brewers, the ice dealers and furniture businesses and the lighter trucks which do delivery work and general hauling for the retailers and smaller wholesale merchants.

The use of these machines has in most every case been satisfactory. One firm reports a saving of over \$100 per day in the expense of its delivery system and others give reports almost as enthusiastic. The capacity of the trucks in Omaha ranges from one to three tons.

Omaha Makes Autos.

The Rogers Motor Car Company, whose plant is located at Ralston, is the only Omaha plant engaged in the manufacture of automobiles. This company which has been engaged in the business but a very short time has only recently decided to increase its capacity from 800 cars a year to 5,000.

The first machine manufactured in Omaha was turned out a few weeks ago and to date but twenty-five have been placed upon the market. That the demand for these should be so large as to justify the company in so vastly increasing its capacity bodes well for the place which Omaha is one day to occupy as a manufacturing point for automobiles.

The cars turned out by the Rogers company are of three kinds and the thing which is sought above all others in their manufacture is durability. It is the aim

of the manufacturers to turn out a car which will stand hard knocks, a car which is suitable for the use of the farmer or the business man, who is willing to sacrifice symmetry of design and elegance of finish to durability and strength. The company which formerly had Ralph Rogers as its general manager has recently elected C. A. Ralston of Chicago to that position. This change was made at the same time that the expansion was decided upon.

The annual endurance run which was instituted this year, the automobile steadyway which has been constructed and the races which have been held upon it have all been indicative of the ever increasing hold that the automobile is gaining upon Omaha's people and of the progress which has been made along automobile lines during the year.

It is expected, however, that the sixth annual automobile show, which is to be held in the Auditorium some time late in February, will give a better indication of that progress than any event which Omaha has yet been privileged to witness. The Omaha Automobile Show association, which has always had the event in charge, and which has, each year, made it a bigger success than it was the year before, is laying plans for the coming show which far eclipse anything yet attempted.

Some of these things are willing to disclose, but more of them they will not make public until later in the year.

Prospects for Auto Show.

The dates for the event have not, as yet, been definitely decided upon, but the dates will probably be about the same as those on which last year's event occurred, the third week in February. The date set by the local men will depend a bit upon what dates are chosen by the New York and Chicago dealers, for many of the same cars which are exhibited at those places will come here for the week of the Omaha exhibition.

Omaha, which is the pioneer city of the west in the matter of automobile shows, will have her pick of the dates left after the principal eastern cities have chosen theirs, and the date of the exhibits at Lincoln and St. Louis, which are this year to have automobile shows for the first time, as well as those in other western cities, will be determined after Omaha announces its date.

Last year there were over fifty exhibitors in the Auditorium and about 250 cars were on the floor. This year it is expected to increase this number, as every dealer will get more space than he had for the last exhibit. It is hardly likely, however, that there will be an exhibition of traffic vehicles this year, as it is desired to confine the exhibits to cars of the automobile class. The extent of the Omaha show can be imagined when it is borne in mind that last year there were but five fewer exhibits than at the Chicago show.

South Omaha night, Council Bluffs night, Lincoln night, Society night and the other features which have made the Omaha show so popular in years past will, in all probability, be retained and

every effort will be made to draw to the city the large number of out-of-town dealers, especially country automobile dealers, which have attended the show in the past.

Of the association which promotes the show and which is composed entirely of dealers, J. J. Derigat is president and Clark G. Powell secretary.

BABY SHOP IN SMALL TOWN

Profits May Not Be Great, but They Help In Numerous Ways.

"If a woman living in a small town can spare a front room she can easily and to her income by keeping a baby shop with a counter of five and ten cent articles," declared a woman, quoted by the New York Sun. "I have averaged a few cents over \$2 a month for the last fifteen months in such a venture without in any way interfering with my household work." "Though my husband has a good position, we have since a brood of young children that I looked about for some way to add to our income in order to give our children advantages. I wanted the eldest girl to begin music lessons and both her and her brother to begin with a French teacher."

"I began by taking in a little fine needlework always children's clothes. One set I made was not satisfactory to the woman who had ordered it, and she told me I might try to sell it and so away myself for my work. I sold it to the second person who saw the set." "After that experience I made other sets, not to order, but just to fill in my time. They sold so well that before I knew it I had gathered a number of customers. Then realizing that there was no baby shop in my town I determined to see what could be done in our spare front room. It took about two years for me to work the business up to its present stand, that is, clearing \$10 a month."

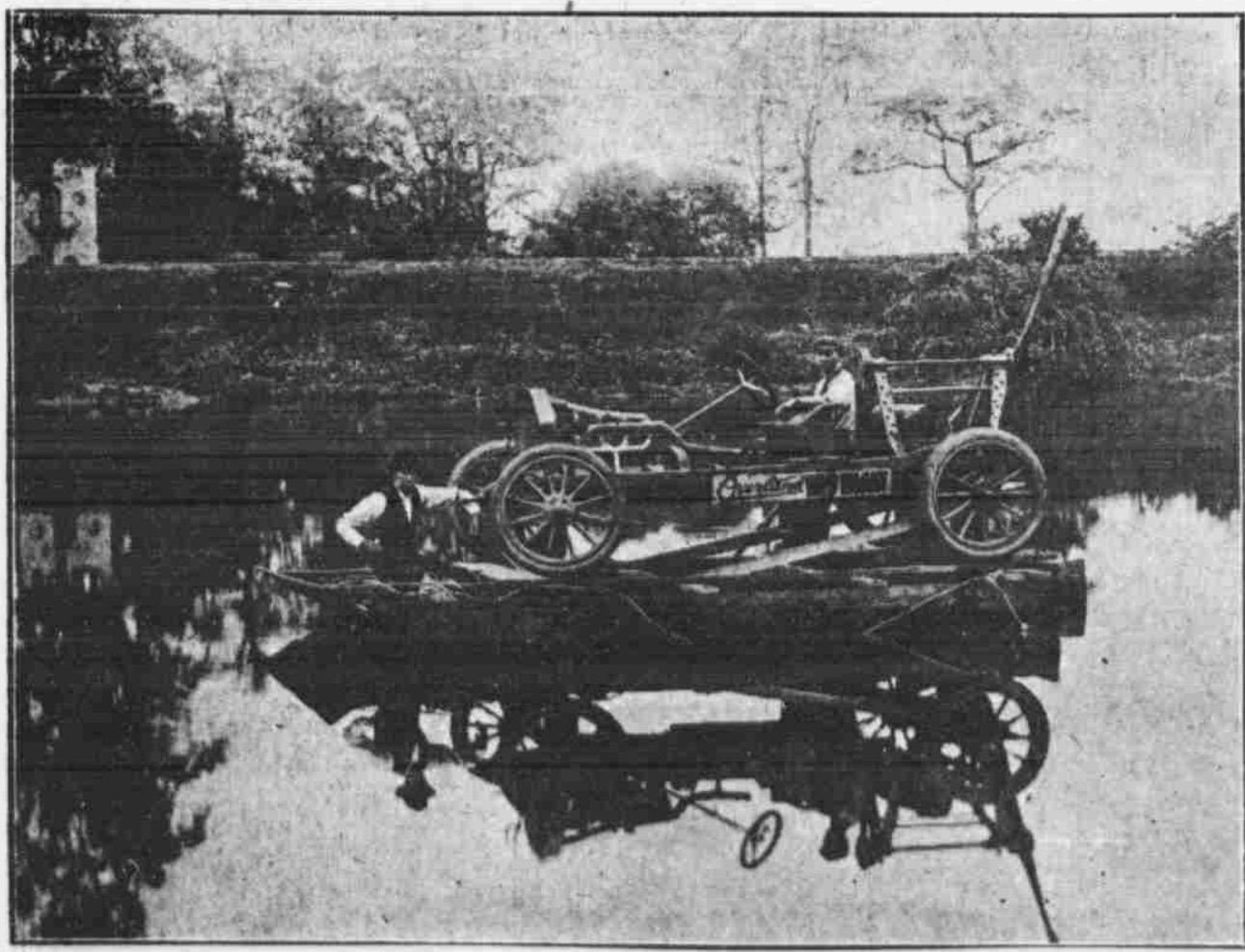
"Of course I don't make all the baby clothes I sell now, though I did when I began. Gradually as my trade increased I secured the services of various women in the town who could sew well and preferred to do the work at home. When I get orders I turn the materials over to them and seldom see the garments until completed. Then I examine them closely both as to fit and finish."

"Besides these garments made to order I keep on hand a supply of staple baby clothes. As they are made with my sewing women have no orders to fill I can afford to sell them at a lower profit than those made to order. I have found it a good plan to keep a good supply of such garments."

"I look upon the addition of the counter of little odds and ends, all selling at either 5 or 10 cents, as almost an inspiration. The idea came to me because often mothers who came to order or buy garments would bring their older children along and the children were disappointed at not finding something on sale that could be bought for them."

"You see in a small town when the average child goes to the store it expects to get some bit of candy or toy. At first I thought of having little inexpensive things on hand to give away, but when I came to figure out the expense I soon discovered that my profits were too small to permit of my offering such inducements. It naturally followed that I should get little things to sell."

Automobile Full of Frisky Pranks



OVERLAND WIND WAGON CATTAMARAN.

When a wooden propeller was placed in the rear of an Overland test car and pushed it by its own creative force a mile a minute in a race with Brookings in a Wright Brothers aeroplane, many persons wondered.

Greater cause for wonder is yet in store. Will H. Brown, vice-president of the company, proved himself a man of ideas and secretly took the wind wagon to a secluded country spot along the White river, at Indianapolis, recently. He then placed it

upon a small float and fastened it securely. By means of wires attached to the steering wheel and then to the rudder he was enabled to take a unique "boat joy ride." To his surprise he could not "turn her on" the propeller gets to revolving about six times a minute and the float glides up stream with ease, the wooden barge sinks under the water's surface, and to persons on the bank the car gives the appearance of running on the top of the river. The

Season of 1911 Is Here

SEE

DRUMMOND

DRUMMOND'S MECHANICS

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FOR WOOD WORK, IRON WORK, PAINTING.
FOR ALL KINDS OF TOP WORK.
FOR NEW TOPS, DUS' HOODS, SEAT COVERS



We Can Equip Your Car With Any Style of "LIMOUSINE BODY"

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